

What is claimed is:

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1. A method for real-time distillation of a source document, comprising:
2 receiving search criteria from a client;
3 searching a plurality of sources based on the search criteria;
4 determining search results responsive to said searching;
5 distilling the search results in accordance with one or more data types,
6 each data type comprising a data type constraint;
7 identifying one or more data type constraints for each search result;
8 finding the data type constraint in the context of each search result, the
9 context having the data type constraint and text surrounding the
10 data type constraint; and
11 creating a distilled result having the context.

1 2. A method as in claim 1, wherein the amount of text surrounding the data
2 type constraint is defined by a user.

1 3. A method for real-time distillation of a source document, comprising:
2 receiving search criteria from a client;
3 searching a plurality of sources based on the search criteria;
4 determining search results responsive to said searching;
5 distilling the search results by identifying one or more key sentences for
6 each search result;
7 finding the key sentence in the context of each source, the key sentence
8 context having the key sentence and text surrounding the key
9 sentence; and
10 creating a distilled result having the key sentence context.

1 4. A method as in claim 1, wherein the amount of text surrounding the key
2 sentence is defined by a user.

1 5. A method for real-time distillation of a source document, comprising:
2 contacting a search server;
3 submitting search criteria to the search server;
4 receiving search results responsive to said submitting;
5 distilling the search results by finding one or more key sentences for each
6 search result;
7 finding the key sentence in the context of each source, the key sentence
8 context having the key sentence and text surrounding the key
9 sentence; and
10 creating a distilled result having the key sentence context.

1 6. A method for displaying search results, comprising:
2 receiving search criteria from a client;
3 searching a plurality of sources based on the search criteria;
4 determining search results responsive to said searching, the search
5 results comprising source documents;
6 distilling the source documents into one or more result objects, each of the
7 result objects corresponding to one of the source documents; and
8 for each result object, creating an index from the result object into its
9 corresponding source document.

1 7. A method as in claim 6, wherein said creating an index for a given result
2 object comprises:
3 finding the portion of the corresponding source document matching a
4 given result object; and
5 creating a path to the portion of the corresponding source document.

1 8. A method as in claim 7, wherein the portion of the corresponding source
2 document is determined by the user.

1 9. A method as in claim 7, wherein the path comprises a hyperlink.

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10. A method for displaying search results, comprising:
1 receiving search criteria from a client;
2 searching a plurality of sources based on the search criteria;
3 determining search results responsive to said searching;
4 distilling the search results;
5 creating a mid-menu by:
6 generating one or more result categories, each result category
7 having a number of results; and
8 determining a content metric of each result category, the content
9 metric being a measure of the value of the result category;
10 and
11 displaying the mid-menu.

11. A method as in claim 10, wherein the determining of the content metric
12. comprises determining a quantitative measure for each result type.

12. A method as in claim 11, wherein the quantitative measure comprises the
13. number of results for each result category.

13. A method as in claim 11, wherein the quantitative measure comprises the
14. number of occurrences of pre-specified data.

14. A method as in claim 10, wherein the determining of the content metric
15. comprises determining a qualitative measure for each result category.

15. A method as in claim 14, wherein the qualitative measure comprises a
16. determining the relevance of the results of the result category to the
17. search criteria.

16. A method as in claim 10, wherein at least one of the result categories
17. comprises a data type.

1 17. A method as in claim 10, wherein at least one of the result categories
2 comprises a user-defined type.

1 18. A method as in claim 10, additionally comprising determining user
2 preferences, and dynamically creating the mid-menu in accordance with
3 the user preferences.

1 19. A method for displaying search results, comprising:
2 receiving search criteria from a client;
3 searching a plurality of sources based on the search criteria;
4 determining search results responsive to said searching;
5 distilling the search results;
6 determining user preferences;
7 creating a mid-menu in accordance with the user preferences by
8 dynamically generating one or more result categories, each result
9 category having a number of results; and
10 determining a content metric associated with each result category,
11 the content metric being a measure of the value of the result
12 category; and
13 displaying the mid-menu.

1 20. A method as in claim 19, wherein the determining of the content metric
2 comprises determining a quantitative measure for each result type.

1 21. A method as in claim 19, wherein the determining of the content metric
2 comprises determining a qualitative measure for each result category.

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